

Senator Mary Margaret Haugen

10th Legislative District

Spring 2004



Senator Mary Margaret Haugen

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Committees

Senate Highways & Transportation,
Senate Judiciary, Senate Rules,
Legislative Transportation Committee

Dear Neighbor,

Although the 2004 legislative session was just 60 days, it allowed us to accomplish some significant things for the people of Washington and for the 10th District.

The Legislature passed a supplemental operating budget that includes no general tax increases, and a supplemental transportation budget that accelerates construction on key projects to improve congestion and freight mobility.

Please read on for some highlights, and feel free to contact me any time about these or any other issues. Thank you for the opportunity to be your senator.

Best wishes,

Mary Margaret Haugen

State Senator, 10th Legislative District

Access Washington: www.access.wa.gov

This site provides one-stop shopping for state services, including renewing vehicle or boat licenses, replacing driver licenses, reporting fraud, getting a business license and ordering a birth certificate.

Cama Beach: \$6.5 million in state construction funds will help restore historic buildings and add amenities to this beautiful site on Camano Island, which will finally become a state park next year.

Coupeville local control: Coupeville will be exempt from certain state growth management requirements because it falls entirely within the Ebey's Landing National Historic Reserve; Coupeville Mayor Nancy Conard said the bill "will help us accept growth without losing the open spaces and rural charm that make our town what it is."

Everett HOV lanes: Because the 7E7 is coming to Everett and the 2010 Olympics are coming to Vancouver, B.C., I succeeded in my transportation goal of accelerating the HOV lanes planned for Interstate 5 through Everett.

Ferries: Ferry passengers won't be paying higher tolls for the new security measures the federal government requires – and there's language in the transportation budget to assure it. Also, \$1 million will be spent to explore ways to preserve the existing Keystone ferry terminal – which will save millions compared to building an entirely new terminal.

Food safety: We worked to restore confidence in the safety of Washington's food products by passing bills to prevent the spread of animal diseases, better track and identify animals, regulate the disposal of animals, and control the movement of so-called "downer" cows, which cannot stand or walk.

Higher education: To relieve the state's overcrowded colleges and universities, the Legislature funded more than \$17 million for about 3,000 additional enrollments and \$4.5 million to help more students pay for college.

Home health-care workers: The 26,000 overworked and underpaid home care givers in our state have a new contract that gives them a 50 cent-an-hour pay raise, plus health benefits.

Island County tax breaks: I worked to have Island County considered rural – even though it narrowly misses the state's official definition – in almost every category so it can offer valuable tax breaks to help attract businesses.

License plate options: Now that the state finally has a means to review special license plate applications, a bill I sponsored creates two long-awaited plates; one that funds a law enforcement memorial for officers killed in the line of duty, and another to fund research to help children with language or speech disabilities.

PBTs (persistent bioaccumulative toxins): The supplemental operating budget includes \$325,000 to study these dangerous chemicals, which are extremely toxic when allowed to build up in the food chain.

School employee raises: They've been denied pay raises when teachers have received them, but now classified school district employees – the backbone of our schools who drive the buses, clean the rooms and cook the meals – will get a well-deserved raise.

Senior property tax relief: Seniors who are retired because of a physical or mental disability often become ineligible for state property tax breaks if their income creeps above the \$30,000 ceiling, but legislation raises that level to a more reasonable \$40,000.

Skagit County flood control: I secured \$500,000 in the supplemental transportation budget so the county can complete engineering and permitting for a flood-control project on the Skagit River. Flooding shouldn't prevent us from getting people and products where they need to be.

Transportation budget: The Legislature's supplemental transportation budget keeps intact the 10-year project list approved last session, while speeding up projects that help move freight and allowing more flexibility to fund public transportation programs throughout the state.

WASL retakes: High-school students will be allowed up to four chances to retake the Washington Assessment of Student Learning, or WASL, the test that will be a graduation requirement in 2008. This will allow teachers to broaden their teaching without worrying about having to teach specifically to the test.



Sen. Haugen received this pint-sized John Deere tractor as a token of appreciation from the Skagit County Farm Bureau.



There were also some disappointments this session

Charter schools: I was sorry to see us budget more than \$600,000 to develop 45 charter schools in Washington. We shouldn't be diverting money from our already under-funded public schools to start what's basically an education "experiment."

Education funding: The budget should have included more money for the Learning Assistance Program – which helps students struggling to read and learn math – along with a statewide K-12 funding study that would have given us valuable information on how our state currently spends its education dollars.

Levy super majorities: A bill to allow school district levies to pass by a simple majority – rather than the current 60 percent supermajority – was derailed by a partisan amendment that would have allowed for the simple majority only during the November general elections.

Medical malpractice: It saddened me that no meaningful medical liability reform legislation passed this session. Skyrocketing malpractice insurance premiums will continue to force dedicated doctors from their practices and emergency physicians from our hospitals until we take steps to ensure that high insurance costs don't undermine the high quality of care that Washington residents expect.

Primary: Perhaps most of all, I hated voting for a new primary election system. Our state's voters have cherished the "blanket" primary for 70 years, and it's a shame that the political parties successfully sued to take it away from us.

You're invited to my town hall meetings!

Stanwood

Wednesday, April 28

9 to 10 a.m.

Lincoln School Senior Apartments
Conference Room
7336 NW 276th St.

(across the street from the senior center)

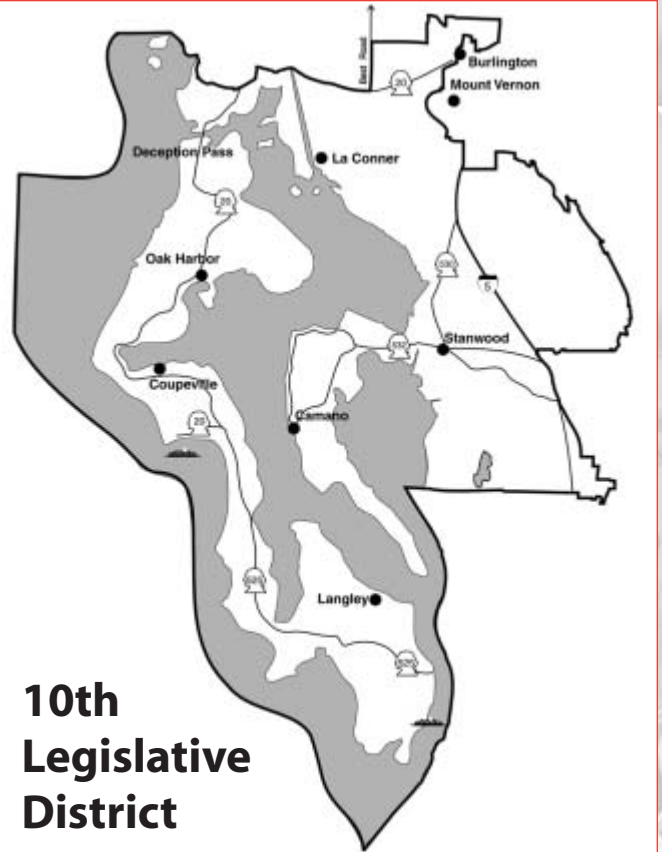
Coupeville

Wednesday, April 28

4 to 5 p.m.

Coupeville Recreation Hall
4 NE 7th St.

Both meetings will also feature my 10th District
seatmates, Reps. Barry Sehlin and Barbara Bailey.



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